



Angela, James & Graeme

### Building Homes in New Orleans

By Hills residents James Hickman, Graeme Radlo, and Angela Takahara

Over the winter break we spent seven days in New Orleans helping rebuild houses damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. We went with The Curriculum Initiative (TCI), an organization that provides high school students with community services opportunities in needy areas.

The three of us, along with eleven other students from Woodside Priory School (Graeme is from Menlo School, James and Angela are from Woodside Priory), joined up with fifty other high school students from East Coast schools to work with Habitat for Humanity. We stayed in the French Quarter and worked in the Musicians Village in the upper 9th Ward and the Audubon Zoo. This was our first time ever in New Orleans and Louisiana. While the French Quarter seemed largely undamaged, it was surrounded by areas that looked like war zones. It was hard to see such destruction. We were glad to be able to lend a hand to help.

Our days started at 5:45 am. We put on our work gloves and took a bus out to the 9th Ward where we moved and installed dry wall, dug ditches for drainage and landscaping, and put finishing touches on near-completed houses. One of the memorable things about our experience was working side-by-side with the families who would eventually be living in the house. Habitat for Humanity requires that families put so many hours of their own time into the construction of their homes. Working with these families gave us a chance to meet and hear what they experienced during and after Katrina. We ended our days tired and sore but still able to enjoy Cajun dishes for dinner like gumbo and jambalaya.

One of the highlights of our trip was hosting a New Years Party at the Audubon Zoo for the children of New Orleans. We also helped clean up the zoo a bit.

We were really glad that we had a chance to meet the families who would live in the houses we were helping to build. We learned that these families appreciated even the smallest jobs we accomplished. But there are still miles and miles of destruction - tons of work to be done. We want to go back and help again.

### SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC EXPANSION FOR THE TOWN HALL

In late 2006, the Town Council of Los Altos Hills voted to expand the solar photovoltaic (PV) system currently installed at the Town Hall. The Town Hall is using more power than originally planned mainly because of the recently built Town Hall cell tower.

The Environmental Initiatives Committee (EIC) has seized the opportunity with the goal of (1) installing a state-of-the-art solar photovoltaic system that tracks the sun and (2) getting the new PV system payback down to less than 12 years (hopefully 10 years). In this manner, the Town Hall will have three types of PV solar systems to serve as examples of what Los Altos Hill residents can install, i.e., roof-mounted, fixed ground-mounted or ground-mounted solar trackers.

The plan is to mount three solar trackers that track the sun and keep the PV panels perpendicular to the sun from sun-up to sundown, which results in about 35% more solar energy per day compared to the fixed systems. These PV trackers will be mounted close to the existing ground-mounted PV systems on the north side of the Hall. The EIC committee, with its expertise in PV trackers systems, has designed a system and refined a bid proposal to solicit qualified contractors in order to keep the costs down.

Additionally, in the spirit of reducing costs, members of the EIC committee spent a recent Saturday putting up story-poles to indicate the profile of the proposed PV trackers systems.— Jay Shideler, Environmental Initiatives Committee



### FUTURE DEVELOPMENT: NEW PARK FOR THE TOWN

At its Annual Strategic Planning Session in August 2006, the LAH City Council agreed that the development of a new park and playground should be a top priority.

The Parks and Recreation Committee are charged with the responsibility of investigating other local parks in the area to begin to estimate space requirements. Ideas for uses include a soccer field, a sports court, playground equipment and picnic tables.

The City Council is responding to the requests from the public for more recreational options for our children and adults alike. This area is chronically short of playing fields and the situation is getting worse given the rising popularity of soccer and flag football. Sports court and playground equipment would help alleviate the lack of access to playgrounds at our public school sites.

Following analysis of the Public Recreation Facilities Survey recently sent to residents, the city council will review the anticipated costs and space requirements. Public hearings will be held to gain input from the residents.

Following public hearings, the city council will move forward on a plan including finding a suitable location, developing a budget and creating a timetable for development.



### EARTH DAY 2007 EVENTS APRIL 21 & 22, 2007

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Pathway Pickup

Join the residents of our town in a special, fun event this Earth Day April 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The Pathway Committee is organizing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Pathway Pickup Day on Earth Day to clean up our town's beautiful pathways. Last year, 20 residents plus 225 children from Bullis Charter School collected over 2,000 pounds of trash along our trails. This year the Charter School is again committed to support the event, and will be joined by 55 students from the Pinewood School.

How can you help? Simple - come to Town Hall anytime between 8AM and 2PM on Earth Day, Sat, April 21<sup>st</sup>. Members of the Pathway Committee will greet you and have supplies ready: safety vests, gloves, trash bags and refreshments. Select a path you would like to walk. Instructions will be provided.

Make a difference on Earth Day this year!



#### Earth Day Celebration at Westwind Barn



Date: Sunday, April 22, 2007

Time: 1 PM - 4 PM

Location: Westwind Barn

The LAH Open Space Committee along with representatives of other Town Volunteer Committees (Environmental Design, Community Relations, Pathways, etc.) are planning for this year's Earth Day Celebration at Westwind Barn.

Leopards, Etc. will again be bringing their wild cats for viewing and for a show. Families will have an opportunity to view close up a mountain lion, lynx, cheetah and other wild cats. Karen Hoyt of Sky Hunters will also be featured with her birds of prey. There will be many displays and interactive activities.

Admission is free, but donations will be gladly accepted to defray costs of the event. Note: Due to possible conflicts with the wild cats, please leave your pet dogs at home.